

# “LEST WE FORGET”

is an endeavor to bring back the  
voices of those who suffered, beyond imagination,  
the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust 1933-45

**Kathe Underwood**

**Kathe Underwood,  
wife of the late Lucas Underwood,  
Feb. 14, 1909 - August 1, 2008,  
was interviewed on July 16, 2005 :  
By Mel Corren and Steve Schermerhorn  
Temple Israel-Rhim Ahoovim  
Stockton, California**

# In Kathe's own words



Kathe Underwood

Feb. 14, 1909 - August 1, 2008

Kathe Underwood, wife of the late Lucas Underwood, died peacefully at her home in Stockton after a brief illness on August 1, 2008. She was 99 years old and was a leader of the area arts community until just a few weeks before her death. She was born Kathe Eisenmann on Valentine's Day, February 14, in 1909 in Augsburg, Germany. Her parents were Lina Binswanger Eisenmann and Sigmund Eisenmann. In 1931 Kathe married Ludwig Unterholzner, a young but already distinguished music scholar and critic.

In 1938 the couple joined the exodus of German Jews fleeing Nazi persecution. Kathe's family was Jewish; her husband was not. Instead he joined her in emigrating to the United States. Sadly, despite extensive efforts, they and the rest of her family were unable to get Kathe's widowed mother out of the country. Her mother was forced to become a slave laborer in an Augsburg military factory before being sent to Auschwitz, where she was killed in 1943.

Upon arriving in this country, the couple signaled their determination to become "real Americans" by changing their names to Kathe and Lucas Underwood. After spending six years teaching in a high school in Versailles, Kentucky, Kathe and Lucas came to Stockton in 1946. There Lucas became a professor of music history at the University of the Pacific and founded the university's opera program. Kathe obtained a bachelor of education degree at UOP and became a teacher with the Stockton Unified School District, primarily at Valley Oaks Elementary. In addition to her teaching, Kathe shared her husband's love of music and determination to make Stockton a cultural center. They were among the founders of the Stockton Opera Association and helped it mount over two dozen productions, for which the Underwoods did everything from design the scenery (Lucas) to take tickets (Kathe). Kathe was also a founding board member of the Stockton Opera Guild and served with distinction as the Guild's president for several terms.

The Underwoods were founding members of the Friends of Chamber Music of Stockton as well, and Kathe served as a member of its board for over 50 years, including several terms as the group's president. In 1990 the couple received the Stockton Arts Commission's STAR Award, Stockton's highest and most prestigious arts recognition. Both Underwoods retired from teaching in the early 1970s, which allowed them to devote even more time to their shared love of travel-they twice went around the world-and to volunteer activity in Stockton. Lucas died in 1992, but Kathe's love for him endured for the rest of her life. She often said she had "the best husband anyone could have ever had" and claimed her continuing activity on behalf of music in Stockton was a tribute to his legacy.

**CREATED BY MEL CORREN  
AND  
STEVE SCHERMERHORN**

**WRITING AND INTERVIEWING .....MEL CORREN**

**PRODUCTION AND RECORDING....STEVE SCHERMERHORN**